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Home Appliance NewsLine

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RECORD MARCH AND FIRST QUARTER FOR MAJOR APPLIANCE SHIPMENTS

CHICAGO -- Over 4.6 million major home appliances were shipped in March and 12.8 million in the first quarter, establishing new shipment records for both periods, reports the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM).

Record shipments for March were 12.5% higher than the previous March and the third largest shipment in history for any month.

Total first-quarter shipments were 9.2% higher than the same 1988 period and third only to the all-time quarterly record of April-June 1987.

Shipments of room air conditioners (845,700 units) made the greatest gains, up 23.9%, tying their previous March record set in 1971. First-quarter shipments of 1.7 million units were up 44.6%. Demand is intense for an adequate product supply this summer, following the inventory depletion that resulted during last year's record heatwave.

Automatic washers (539,100 units) and disposers (413,600 units) also set new March records. Shipments of these products increased by 8.3% and 14.4%, respectively.

Five other products contributed to the excellent March by registering double-digit gains. Shipments were up:

* 19.1% for microwave ovens (906,500 units);
* 15.6% for built-in electric ranges (58,400 units);
* 12.4% for free standing gas ranges (183,400 units);
* 10.3% for freezers (90,000 units); and

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* 10.1% for refrigerators (564,100 units).

Only one product, compactors (18,900 units) did not surpass its year-ago levels.

The continued strength of the economy, coupled with the record demand for room air conditioners, lifted March home appliance shipments to unexpectedly high levels.

Although shipments for the first three months of the year are 7.8% ahead of last year's comparable period, the industry forecasts a 3.7% decline in total shipments by year-end.

1984 through 1987 were record years for the industry, resulting in annual shipments of 41.2 million, 43.6 million, 47.0 million and 49.8 million units, respectively. 1988 shipments declined slightly to 49.2 million units, with further softening expected this year.

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MAJOR HOME APPLIANCE INDUSTRY SHIPMENTS*, THOUSANDS OF UNITS
March, 1989

	MARCH			CALENDAR YEAR TO DATE		
	1989	1988	% Change	1989	1988	% Change
ALL MAJOR APPLIANCES**	4,638.3	4,122.6	12.5%	12,816.3	11,735.4	9.2%
COOKING - TOTAL	1,358.5	1,172.4	15.9%	4,132.3	3,860.3	7.0%
ELECTRIC RANGES - TOTAL	272.9	251.0	8.7%	742.9	730.0	1.8%
Free Standing	214.6	200.5	7.0%	582.7	581.2	0.3%
Built-in	58.4	50.5	15.6%	160.2	148.9	7.6%
GAS RANGES - TOTAL	194.0	175.4	10.6%	508.1	506.7	0.3%
Free Standing	183.4	163.2	12.4%	480.3	475.4	1.0%
Built-in	10.6	12.1	-12.4%	27.8	31.3	-11.2%
MICROWAVE OVENS/RANGES***	906.5	761.4	19.1%	2,923.9	2,669.0	9.6%
HOME LAUNDRY - TOTAL	923.8	857.2	7.8%	2,818.8	2,702.8	4.3%
AUTOMATIC WASHERS	539.1	497.9	8.3%	1,604.0	1,536.4	4.4%
DRYERS - TOTAL	384.7	359.2	7.1%	1,214.8	1,166.4	4.1%
Electric	297.7	276.6	7.6%	941.1	903.4	4.2%
Gas	87.0	82.7	5.2%	273.7	263.0	4.1%
KITCHEN CLEAN UP - TOTAL	756.0	692.9	9.1%	2,183.5	2,056.0	6.2%
DISPOSERS	413.6	361.5	14.4%	1,185.1	1,082.9	9.4%
DISHWASHERS - TOTAL	323.5	307.7	5.1%	942.1	912.7	3.2%
Built-in	306.1	288.0	6.3%	882.3	845.6	4.3%
Portable	17.4	19.7	-11.7%	59.8	67.2	-11.0%
COMPACTORS	18.9	23.7	-20.3%	56.3	60.4	-6.8%
FOOD PRESERVATION - TOTAL	654.1	593.8	10.2%	1,768.3	1,697.6	4.2%
REFRIGERATORS	564.1	512.2	10.1%	1,491.2	1,435.5	3.9%
FREEZERS - TOTAL	90.0	81.6	10.3%	277.2	262.1	5.8%
Chest	52.8	43.6	21.1%	156.1	142.1	9.9%
Upright	37.3	38.0	-1.8%	121.1	120.0	0.9%
HOME COMFORT - TOTAL	945.9	806.2	17.3%	1,913.4	1,418.7	34.9%
ROOM AIR CONDITIONERS	845.7	682.3	23.9%	1,744.1	1,206.1	44.6%
DEHUMIDIFIERS	100.2	124.0	-19.2%	169.3	212.6	-20.4%

* Domestic plus export shipments: includes both U.S. produced and imported products.
** Numbers do not add because of overlapping product categories.
*** Includes microwave ovens and combination microwave ovens/ranges.